

Impartial Reflections ON THE *Theology vol 24* MINUTE

Which THE AUTHOR received
from The Ministers of The Calvinistical Baptist
Board, by the hands of Mess. GILL and
BRINE, as an answer to his late PROPOSAL
for an accommodation.

In A LETTER to that Reverend Body,

By SAYER RUD D, M.D. *K*

— Pudet haec opprobria nobis
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.
Oxon. Metam, Libr. Feb. xiv.

mine is not the doctrine of One God, and three distinct persons;
mine is not the doctrine of One supreme and two subordinate
Gods; mine is not the doctrine of One God and two persons.
Are you so weak as to ask, What is the plain doctrine of the Bible?
I have told you once and again, That it is the doctrine of One God,
and One Mediator, the plain, explicit doctrine of The New
Bible: One God, or One Divine Being under his two com-
prehensive characters of Father and Spirit; the former inclu-
ding all titles of Relation, and the other all terms of Energy, by
which he is spoken of in Scripture: And One Mediator, under
the characters of The Son, Jesus, Messiah; and the rest.

L O N D O N:

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Thomson




THE MINUTE

THAT it appears to us from this Letter, that Dr. Sayer Rhudd is now of the same sentiment as to the doctrine of the Trinity or three persons and one God we apprehended him to be, by the manuscript delivered to us Feb. 26, 1733-4. which he declared to contain a confession of his faith respecting that article, upon which we Determined no more to meet him as a member of this Society.

*Blackwell's Coffee-house
March 29, 1735. **


* This is their *Minute* to a little; only that I have diversified the character as above, that so the reader might see, at one view, the several distinct branches on which these reflections proceed.





To the reverend the ministers of *the*
particular baptist persuasion meet-
ing at *Blackwell's Coffee House*.

Reverend Gentlemen,



YOU have now, in consequence
of my promise to you, an an-
swer to *the minute* which you
were pleased to order me in re-
turn for my last letter. What-
soever reason I may give you to
complain of *the length* of my epistles,* I find
you will take care, on your part, not to bur-
den me with any *long* answers. You have
dispatched that in about six lines, which, one
would have thought, should have deserved so
many halfsheets. How much *ingenuity* and
judgment, learning and *bonesty* you have dis-
covered in this work, will be seen best by the
observations upon it: And therefore that I
may set you in the most distinguished light
to the churches, as well as spare what I can of
your time for their service, I shall make no
farther

A 2

* The first notice that the reverend Mr. *Wilson*, as secretary
of the board, was pleased to take of my *second*, was in this
elegant phrase: *A long letter was received, &c.*

farther introduction ; but procede to acquaint you, that I design to *animadvert* on this great performance in the manner following :

First, I shall lay before you such observations as look with a *direct* aspect upon the *minute* itself. And

Secondly, Subjoin others connected with it in a *more distant* or *general* way.

As to the observations of the former kind, they naturally subdivide into two heads,

I. Such as regard your answer in the *substance* or *gross* of it. And

II. Such as arise from the *several* parts of which it is made up.

Now as to what concerns the former of these heads, I mean your *minute* in the *substance* or *bulk* of it,

I cannot but observe, in the first place, the *shortness* of it. It must be confessed, indeed, that some persons have a peculiar happiness in gathering up the general drift of a prolix writer, throwing together the amount of his principles, and refuting his arguments in a few words ; but, I doubt, this great talent does not fall to the share of the *particular baptist* ministers. You do not challenge it to your selves. -- Nay, I will not promise for your *modesty* in that case. You make it no branch of your studies. That I believe :

believe : And you are certainly very prudent in saving yourselves *unnecessary* trouble.

But how then ? In what way are we to account for this *brevity* ? --- To answer a man, where his system is controverted, is to examine his principles, and refute his arguments ; whereas this board, like those who are for taking the *shortest* way with the Diffenters, have determined the case, without advancing any thing in *defence* of themselves, or *refutation* of me. For which reason this *shortness* could not be affected with any intention of that kind, I mean, as a *real answer*. No truly ; it is quite another thing : This is an *air*, that the *particular baptist* ministers were willing to give themselves. Is it so ? You had a mind, I suppose, to *snub* the author, and let the world see with how much *indifference* you could treat every thing, that was his. And you promise yourselves a large revenue of praise from this *light, trifling* behaviour ? Why, it might have done well enough, had it never come under the notice of any body more *discerning* than yourselves. But what, think you, will the *considerate, judicious* part of mankind say to it ? You are not such very *novices* sure, as to believe you may use me at your pleasure, and yet secure approbation from *all* quarters. Will the *learned* world, do you imagine, suppose me so much your *inferior*, either in *natural* or *acquired* abilities, as to think I did not deserve some little shew of

of respect, and something that bore the colour of an answer?

I am really concerned for you. Why will you expose your own *weaknesses*, and oblige the public to think *meanly* of you? You *believed* I would print your *minute*; I know you *expected* it: And so by answering me in this *courte* way, as I said before, you designed to let the public see how much you *despised* me?—Alas, my brethren, this is a very ticklish point; we cannot move too *softly* and *cautiously* in things of this nature. For how often are *the wise taken in their own craftiness*? How often does the mischief we designed others return on our own pates, and we ourselves fall into the pit we had digged for our neighbour? What an *unhappy* turn would things take for this *board*, should the world form an estimate of your principles, both in *humanity* and *the Christian religion*, from this part of your conduct? Whose would be *the contempt* then?—How readily might the world be tempted to think lightly of the whole interest among *the particular baptists*, while they observe such *shallow, illnatured* folks at the head of it?

2. Another observation, which I have to make under this head, is, That take *the minute* in *the substance* and *bulk* of it, we shall find it neither *grammar* nor *sense*. For to say nothing about the particle *of*, the omission of which renders the following sentence very *incomplete*; is now of the same sentiment we
 appre-

apprehended him to be [of]: Where is the construction to begin and say, *That it appears to us, &c?* And then, it concludes as lamely, or, to speak more properly, it ends without a conclusion; that is to say, there is no inference, pertinent to the present occasion, drawn from the premises. You only tell us, that a year ago you determined to meet me no more as a member of *the particular baptist board*. And what then? Where is the purport of this to the case in hand? Why are we not farther told, that you again confirm what was determined a twelve-month since? Or that you resolve to *abide* by your former article? No, all that is to be supplied: What were those sounds too *harsh* for Gentlemen of your *tendernefs*? Or had you a mind to leave yourselves room to make what *additions* you pleased by and by?

Surprising! What a *mutilated, dismembered* thing is this *minute* of yours! No wonder, indeed, it is so short, when it has neither head nor tail to it.---- Gentlemen, I do not know how it is; I find *old* love cannot be presently extinguished: But you know my foolish, compassionate temper. I cannot bear to see you manage thus *awkardly*. A board of ministers! An assembly of divines! Why, a *school-boy* would be ashamed of such stuff. I must set you to rights if possible: And I see no way, either of assisting you in the present case, or preventing you from making such *blunders* for time to come, unless it be to
present

present you with this article *intire*, in its *full length* and *proper proportion*, (though without drawing the pen over any of your own elegant expressions) that so when it comes to be deposited among your other *records*, you may have recourse to it, as a *standing form*, upon every future emergency of this kind.

Now I fancy, what is so very *obnoxious* in this case, might be relieved by some such method as this:

Blackwell's Coffee House,

March 29, 1735.

Present,

Mr. GILL in the chair,

Mr. WILSON, Mr. DEW,

Mr. BRINE, Mr. BRAITHWAITE.

The LONG letter being read ----- So

AGREED,

That it appears to us from this letter, that *Dr. Sayer Rhudd* is now of the same sentiment as to the doctrine of the Trinity or three persons.

* *Mr. Braithwaite!* Why, who would have thought to have found him here? It is not many months ago that a particular acquaintance of his *importuned*, or *desired* him to attempt something in my favour with the board, or endeavour to reconcile matters between me and them, when the good man was as *bumble* and *modest* as to say: No, it was an affair, that happened before his coming to town, and therefore, truly, he should not concern himself with it. — I suppose, he has forgot himself or altered his mind since that, or his conscience, belike, is troubled only when he is called to assist in *pacific* measures, and takes a different turn upon every other occasion. See what frail creatures we all are!

persons and one God we apprehended him to be
 of, by the manuscript delivered to us Feb. 26,
 1733-4. which he declared to contain a con-
 fession of his faith respecting that article,
 upon which we determined no more to
 meet him as a member of this society; and
 therefore we continue in the same resolution, and
 confirm the minute which was then made.

You see, Gentlemen, I have kept your
 hobbling way of expression thro' the body of
 the article, only by prefixing the word
 AGREED at the beginning, and adding a
 sentence at the end (which I have connected
 in the best manner I could, considering what
 goes before) I am humbly of opinion, I have
 made it *English*; the expression, I think, is
 helped a little, however the sense comes off:
 For, indeed, to have made it complete, you
 should have said not only that, you were re-
 solved to meet me no more, but not to shew me
 common respect; not to consider my principles,
 nor return me a Christian answer: as we shall
 see hereafter.

Thus I have done with the observations I
 had to make respecting the bulk of your
 minute: I am now,

II. To subjoin such as arise from the several
 parts of our answer. And here I would ob-
 serve,

1. Your penetration and shrewdness, in con-
 cluding, That I am now of the same opinion as
 to the doctrine of The Trinity, or, as you very
 well explain it, three persons and One God, that

B

I was

I was of a twelvemonth ago. Really, Gentlemen, I must own you surprise me. How could you possibly find this out? What a *stretch* and *compass* of thought must this board have, that, after I had told them over and over, in so many different places, and after so many different ways, that I could not part with *The Divine Unity*, they should at last be sure, they might safely affirm, I was of *the same sentiment now* concerning the popular scheme, that I was of in *February 1733-4*? Surely we must impute it to an *extraordinary force* of genius, a *peculiar happiness* of reasoning, that you were able to *infer* thus *roundly* in a matter so *very intricate*!

And yet, as wonderful as all this is, there is either a great deal of *ignorance*, or a great deal of *sophistry* in it. The reason is, That tho' it must be confessed, there is something in my present case *analogous* with what it was a twelvemonth ago; yet that there is likewise something in it *intirely new*, and that this part you either *did not*, or *would not* observe.

It is very true, that as to the doctrine of *three divine persons* in *one divine essence*, I am still as wide of it, as I was at the time referred to in this *minute*. But, suppose you, is that sufficient to bear you off in the present state of the question? Was that the *only* thing you had to consider upon the representation made to you in my last letter? Or was it not rather, whether the state of the doctrine there exhibited was more *defensible* and *scriptural*?
Certainly

Certainly there is a wide difference between that scheme which confounds *The Divine and Mediatorial Beings*, as *the manuscript* did,* and that which preserves the *scriptural* distinction between *The One God*, and *The One Mediator*.

Wherefore, with submission, Gentlemen, his had been your work as *ministers of the gospel*, and such who had made yourselves judges of my *orthodoxy*, to have entered into

B 2

the

* The difference between *the manuscript*, and *the present state* of the doctrine, so far as it respects *The Divine Unity*, is as here follows :

THE MANUSCRIPT.

PRESENT STATE.

1. I believe that there is but One God, and that this God is A Spirit, eternal, infinite, invisible and incomprehensible.

2. I believe that The One God, in the revelation he has made of himself in his word, stands described by the personal characters or names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

3. I believe that these characters or names do not intend, that there are three distinct subsistencies or personalities in the Godhead ; but only design the relations that The One God stands in to his people, or the several ways in which he has been, or is pleased to exert his power and grace for their recovery and salvation.

1. I believe that there is but One God and that this God is A Spirit, eternal, infinite, invisible, and incomprehensible.

2. I believe that The One God, in the revelation he has made of himself in his word, together with The Mediator, stand described by the personal characters or names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

3. I believe that those characters or names do not intend, that there are three distinct subsistencies or personalities in the Godhead ; but only design the relations, that The One God, and The Mediator, stand in to each other, and to the elect ; or the several ways in which they have been, or are pleased to exert their power and grace for the recovery and salvation of the church.

the merits of the argument, in its *last edition* and have considered, whether you had not sufficient reason to allow it *well founded* on the sacred oracles; and therefore, whether there was not room for you to have secured a *good conscience* in acknowledging me as a *fellow Christian*, and *minister* with you. But here you leave us in the dark, and content yourselves with saying (if I may be allowed to express it my own way) *That I appear to be as much averse to the doctrine of three divine persons in my second letter, as I did by the manuscript of February 1733-4.*

But will this satisfy me, who am *inquiring after truth*? Or will it vindicate you to the world, as *stewards of the manifold mysteries of God*?---Be so kind, as to let me know, what excuse I am to make for you on this score: Whether you did not *really see this remarkable difference*, or whether you were willing to *cover it*, and let it *slip over in silence*.---Let me tell you, Gentlemen, you ought to think this a very necessary part even as to your own interest, least mankind should attribute that to *wickedness*, which was only meant *ignorantly*.

However, because I think *the distinction* must needs have been beaten into you by this time, and I know, that persons of your *cast* had rather suffer in point of *honesty*, than *sense*; I shall take the liberty to suppose, that you were certainly aware of *this difference*; but *wisely* apprehended, that it would not be for your *service*,

tion *vice*, to meddle with it in your *answer*. But why so, Gentlemen? Would it unhinge you in your *commonplace* way of reasoning, and in-
 tangle you in a *controversy* that might possibly cost you some expence of thought? And if it as a mad? It is no more than what you must come
 But no, unless you are resolved to disclaim your pretensions to all sentiments of *humanity*, and contentedly resign your character as *champions of truth*; to make use of a *title* that one gives you in a letter, which lies by me.

Pray, Gentlemen, indulge me a few minutes on each of these heads: And first,

As to the *humanity* of your tempers, or your share in the *practical part* of brotherly kindness. Good now, what have I done, Gentlemen, that you treat me quite as an *outcast*, that I am become no other than an *heathen* and a *publican* to you? How have I forfeited that *common respect* which is due to one of the same species with yourselves; that you can see me upon the brow of a precipice, but an hair's breadth, as it were, between me and destruction; and yet never give me the least warning, nor stretch out a kind hand to recover and pull me back? What can the ministers of the *particular baptist* persuasion say for themselves, when they observe a brother running into error, *fundamental* error, as they call it, and yet make *no attempts* to convict him, use *no means* to reclaim him; notwithstanding they possess all necessary furniture, and have the *whole truth* at their fingers ends?—
 Verily, Gentlemen, if you dare believe me,
 this

this is all that I want, all the favour I desire at your hands. Do but *refute* my principles, and I am contented: It is indifferent to me, whether I go by the name of a *trinitarian*, or that of an *unitarian*, provided I have proper ground to conclude that my sentiments are *scriptural*; or provided, at least, that my conscience does not upbraid me with *wilfully* taking the wrong side. See then, Gentlemen, in what a narrow compass your work lies. And do you refuse me this? Dreadful indeed! Am I then so despicable a creature, so much below the rest of mankind, that you have no concern for my soul, no honour to hope from making me a proselyte; but that it is intirely equal to you, whether I am *saved* or *damned*; whether I am *with you*, or *against you*?

Think with yourselves; it is a matter of consequence, Gentlemen, and therefore I urge it; think with yourselves, How will you answer it another day, should my blood be required at your hands? And where should it lie, if I eternally miscarry, but at your door; if it be so, that you have it in your power to convince me of a *fundamental mistake*, and yet will not be at the pains to give me *one friendly admonition*? Will it be believed, think you, should this story be told an age hence, that those whose business it was to watch for the souls of their brethren, and to exhort them with all *long suffering*, *meekness* and *patience*, were so obdurate in themselves, so wanting to their duty, as neither to open their mouths, nor set pen to paper, in any such way?

It is not sure any extraordinary trouble attending this work, that has deterred you from attempting my conviction. I think verily, there could not be much of that for you to be afraid of. This is a matter that would never have incumbered *the whole body*. You had only to appoint your persons; to have deputed a brother or two on this business.---Nay, now I think of it, Mr. Gill, without any such deputation, might very well have appeared in it himself. We have all of us something of this kind to challenge from him.---My self, because he is my *old friend*; one that I was always ready to serve, where it ever lay in my power: This board, because he is, at least, one of your first rate members; acknowledged, I believe, by a considerable majority, to understand his *own scheme*, as well as any amongst you.---Nay farther, those without doors, the very world, might be *reasonably* allowed a demand of this nature upon Mr. Gill; because he promises to be a *voluminous* writer, and seems to think that the best way to secure the reputation of a *great man* is to publish a *great number* of books.---What shall I say? He ought to have *distinguished* himself in this matter for several reasons, which he has furnished us with in his own writings. Mr. Gill has *leisure* for such work; possesses *abilities* for it; is *fond* of controversy, and thinks it a sort of *wholesome severity* to the church.* But see how it is, where we expect most,

* See *The postscript* of his letter to Mr. Abraham Taylor.

most, tho' it be justly too, how often does it happen, that we meet with a disappointment. Neither Mr. Gill separately, nor the other reverend members in conjunction, notwithstanding the consequences on all sides are the most *affecting* and *solemn*, will attempt anything towards my *conviction* and *recovery*. ---But thus much for your *benevolence* and *charity*.

Let us now see the observables on the other branch of this argument, I mean your *prowess* for *orthodoxy*. Are the members of this board to be told, that those, who assume the name of *ministers of the gospel*, are to be *valiant* for *the truth*, and to *contend earnestly* for *the faith once delivered to the saints*?—What proofs have you given us of this sort? It is no hard matter to make it appear, that some of you have *deserted* the truth, in more instances than one; but that you have acted the part of *good soldiers* of CHRIST, or stood forth as *champions* in his cause, will admit of dispute. For example, in the present case, you look upon me to be in *an error, an error*, for what I can tell, in your account, *subversive* of the glory of CHRIST, and the great doctrines of the gospel. You know I am so obstinate in the opinion, and have been so audacious in the profession of it, that I have not only asserted it, at different times, by writing to this venerable assembly; but preached upon it in a public manner, for fifteen weeks successively.

Now

Now the question here is, What pains have you been at to defend *the orthodoxy* of the day against these inroads? To prove my *tenets* an-
 scriptural, and maintain *the prejudices* of the people in favour of *the common doctrine*? I hope you do not think, that the perpetual use of a certain set of *doxologies* is sufficient to excuse you in this point? Or that calling my principles a *stale heresy* (of which I shall speak in its place) is the whole requisite to secure your pretensions on this head? Much less, would I believe, can you imagine, that going privately into families, and endeavouring to *raduce* me among your friends, has any claim either to the title of a *defense* on your side; or *refutation* on mine. And yet, I do not find, that you have made any other progress, any greater achievements than these, neither in a *private* nor *public* capacity: As a *board* I am positive you have not, tho' the argument has been before you once and again; unless treating the author and his principles after the manner of *the inquisition*, that is, condemning both in the lump, for no other reason, as appears yet, but that they thwart your *prejudices*, is to be looked upon as a superior instance of *spiritual heroism*.

Alas! Gentlemen, I very well know how it is; you are for *no fair, open* debate. You read the thoughts of a *controversy* on this argument. One of no small figure among yourselves, has signified as much. But what are we to conclude from hence, unless it be either,

C

That

That you have *a very bad cause* to defend, what you *despair* of carrying with the *judicious* part of mankind; or, That you are *hardened* to all sense of *modesty* and *honour*; I mean, are prepared to be counted any thing but Gentlemen of *ingenuity* to your fellow creatures, or *faithfulness* to your Lord and master. But I procede.

2. The next animadversion is to be placed to that *fondness* which you are always discovering for those particular expressions, *The Trinity*, or *Three Persons* and *One God*. Nothing I observe will go down with you but that *precise* phraseology; which, I must own, is to me very unaccountable, since I cannot conceive, whence it is; that those terms derive their *value*, or what it is that gives them such *weight* with you. Is it that they are to be found in our *Bible*, or that they receive any *sanction* from the *usage* of *Scripture*? That, I verily think, you will not pretend to affirm. *The Scriptures*, it is most certain, never speak in any such way; never indulge any such words. Is it not then very surprising, that Gentlemen of your zeal for *Revelation* should be so fond of *human expressions*? I beg of you, take care what you do; it is a very tender point, I assure you.—If you should press us too hard with this *phraseology*, and have nothing to support it, in the upshot, but the authority of some *popish schoolmen*, we shall mistrust your *faithfulness*; we shall think you have no very good designs upon *Scripture*, nor any

any great honour for the author of it. Surely, you do not want to shackle us with terms of human invention, as a set of Gentlemen at *Salter's Hall* were for serving their brethren about sixteen years ago? Is there no form of sound words in *The Scripture* for me to build my faith, and make my confession upon; but must I take them from *councils* and *catechisms*, from *churches* and *assemblies*? You will give us some strange ideas of the wisdom and goodness of the Divine majesty if you go on after this manner. What then, was the Divine being so unmerciful to the human race, that he would not acquaint them with the real purport of his mind? Or, was he so weak, that he could not hit upon words sufficiently full and significant to express himself by? Fie, Gentlemen: I know you will not assert any such thing in direct terms; but have you forgot the old proverb, *That actions speak louder than words*. *Athanasius*, indeed, says, *That tho' there are three eternal, yet there is but one eternal*; and again, *That tho' there are three almighties, yet that there is but one almighty*. But you cannot believe, either that a man understands himself, or is really in earnest, when one part of his confession contradicts another, or when he denies that in facts, which he asserts in words.

For myself, Gentlemen, I must needs say, That I entertain much higher thoughts of him, who is The God of all wisdom and grace, and of that *Revelation*, which he has given us,

as the standard of our *faith* and *practice*, than to believe, that he was either so *straightned* in his own breast, or so *impoverished* with respect to language, as not to be *willing* and *able* to give us his full mind, without laying himself, or his church, under a necessity to take it from *dark* and *fallible* creatures. And therefore, you must not expect, that I shall agree with *any* of your *expressions*, till you produced *A thus saith the Lord*.---This, indeed, I have to say, so very good humoured am I, and so willing to cultivate peace, that, if you can show me that text, which speaks of *the first person*, I will, without giving you the trouble of finding another, readily conclude, there is certainly *a second*: Or if you can show me that place in my *Bible*, which speaks of *the third person*; I will then also freely acknowledge, that there must be *two* other, namely, *the first* and *the second*.

Look ye, Gentlemen, it is vain to shuffle with me on the point; Something of this kind I shall expect. For, as I said above, so I say here, I think, and cannot but think, more highly of *Revelation*, and *the great author* of it, than to imagine, that he has delivered himself so *darkly* and *brokenly*, that he is not to be *understood*, till you have *explained* what he *means*.

It is nothing to tell me of *personal characters*, and *personal operations*: For if that method of reasoning be just, you need only pursue it, and you may furnish yourselves with *thirty*, as readily

readily as *three persons* in the Godhead. And you know, that argument which proves *too much*, is no more for your purpose, than that which proves *too little*.

And so as to your *catechisms* and *confessions* of faith, which I have likewise spoken of before, What are they to me? Mere *human compositions*; put together, it may be, by persons of honest minds, and such who meant well, as far as they knew; but they were still *men* only, and therefore liable to *mistakes*.

True, indeed, this *blind* way of talking, this *circle* of words might do well enough, were it to be intirely confined within the walls of your own *meeting houses*, and to reach the ears of those only, who are *prejudiced* in your favour; but assure yourselves, if this sort of doctrine comes to fall from your pens, and is to make its appearance in *print*, it will never go down with those, who have been used to think for themselves, and will take nothing on trust in matters of faith.

The Bible, Gentlemen, *The Bible* (as the great *Chillingworth* expresses it) is the standard of my religion. To *the law* and to *the testimony*, for if you speak not according to these, it is because there is no light in you. I know you are as *ready* at such a *profession* as any body; but while it appears, that you contradict that in *practice*, which you acknowledge in *words*; I mean, in short, while it can be proved, that you really *despise*, and *abuse* The Holy

Holy Writings, you must excuse others, if they cannot believe you.

For my part, I am so much in love with *The Scriptures*, from a conviction of their *false*ness and *sufficiency* to all the great purposes of *doctrine* and *manners*, that I shall never think, I have any occasion to call in the *foreign* assistance of other writers to settle my *creed*. And should any attempt to practise upon me in that way, as I should think it the grossest insult upon *the perfection* of *Scripture*; because it would be saying in fact, that it was not a *complete system* of divine knowledge; I imagine, it would not only teach me to be aware of *that man*; but tend to open my eyes, and give me a shrewd *suspicion* of his *principles*.

But that is not all: As you shamefully *neglect* *Scripture* in these instances, so, Gentlemen, you egregiously *trifle* with it in other. It is, in short, in your hands, no better than a *nose of wax*; what you work into *every shape*, and manage to *every purpose*. To convince you of this, I would only ask, Which of you all goes *openly*, and without *prepossession*, to The Sacred Oracles? Which of you all can prevail upon himself to take things as they lie there, and present themselves in their *native simplicity*, free from *the intangled glosses* of others? No, if you would *honestly* enter into your own breasts, and determine *impartially* on this branch of your conduct, you would find, on the contrary, that your great business, your

your principal concern, is to *torture* Scripture to your *private schemes*, and make it speak to your *particular prejudices*. Here, it is true, you tug hard; this you *labour* incessantly: But will this carry the argument? Not with me, I assure you. I neither care whose *scheme* you adopt, nor whose *expressions* you borrow: For so long as I perceive, that you neither speak the language of *The Bible*, nor have the concurring testimony of *Scripture* to support you, I promise you, I shall make no scruple of telling you, that I shall suspect a *flaw* somewhere; either in your *integrity*, or *intellects*: And for that reason take the liberty, whether you like it or not, to set aside your *terms*, and dispute your *hypothesis*.

Now here, I can easily believe, one and another of this reverend assembly impatient to retort, and say to me as follows: *Tie ourselves down to Scripture; speak in the language of our Bibles! Why then, farewell to the ministry; that is to bring all preaching to an end.* Why so? I cannot see that; if by *preaching* you mean *commenting* on *Scripture*, or *explaining* one part of *Holy Writ* by another, which I think verily ought to be our notion of *preaching*, provided we speak of *spiritual* things in a *proper* manner. If *Scripture* will not so far *explain itself*, as to furnish me with sufficient matter for an hour's discourse, I shall think, I had better quit the ministry, than ever get into a pulpit. That *preaching* which is not either *expressly dictated* in *Scripture*, or
plainly

plainly consistent with it, is, in my opinion, better forborn, than continued.

But as I have not so little observed *the sentiments and practice* of the age, but that I *plainly* perceive, the far greater part of our *divinity and preaching* is *systematical*,* I mean that men form their judgments in matters of *faith* upon *bodies of divinity*, and preach their *particular schemes* rather, or more than their *Bibles*; if by *bidding a farewell to the ministry*, or *bringing all preaching to an end*, you intend *a ministry* of this sort, *all preaching* of this kind, that we shall have no more *systematical divinity nor preaching*; be it so: I should be glad to see it; the sooner the better. Could we once get resolution enough to throw off these shackles, I should be in great hopes that *light* would again break out, and *truth* prevail amongst us *at last*. And I imagine, there is *apparently* so much reason for the thing, a noble attempt of this kind, that there can be no need of collecting arguments to inforce it. For I do not know what *just* pretensions any can have to the character of *a minister of the gospel*,

* Agreeable to this, it is common with those, who have any degree of *school learning*. among *the particular baptists*, after they have made a *cursory* introduction to the text, and, in a *slight, superficial* manner, run over the several parts of it, to collect themselves, as fast as they can, into *one doctrinal point, or general proposition*; and then, having thus ingeniously disengaged themselves from the passage on which they sat out, apply for *all* farther assistance to their *bodies of divinity*, TURETIN especially, where they are sure to find *matter and method* ready prepared to their hands. A glorious ministry this! Notable preaching, on my word!

gospel, who does not preach *the doctrines of the gospel*; nor why a person cannot discourse as long in a consistency with *Holy Writ*, as in a consistency with the institutions of Calvin, or the doctrines of Arminius.

But it is very likely, Gentlemen, I shall be farther told: That *this is leaving things too much at large*; the way to level all persons and all persuasions: Each denomination of Christians, you will say, lays claim to The Scripture, and then The Arian, Sabellian, Socinian, and the rest, will stand upon as good a foot as ourselves.---And why should not they? Who is lord of another man's conscience? Or what vicar general has CHRIST appointed to state the absolute meaning of Scripture, and draw up articles of faith for all his followers? Let them plead Scripture. It is not their using the word, but proving they have the thing. Their pleading of Scripture is no argument that we must believe as they do, because we are all to see with our own eyes: Neither is it an argument, why we should utterly condemn them, because, tho' they differ from us in some things, it is to be supposed, that they judge according to the best of their light. Indeed, it may be difficult to fix the precise point of union; how far we are to accede, and where it is proper for us to stop: But as no Scripture is of private interpretation, I do not know, that we have any right to abridge others of a common privilege.

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Our

Our business, I think, is to form our own principles upon the best evidence we can come at, and leave others to conduct in the like manner for themselves ; not rejecting any thing *purely* because it may be *common* with those, who in *the bulk* of their sentiments may be *erroneous*.

Not but, I believe, in the general, we carry matters too far ; are much too severe. For I cannot help saying, That I am of opinion, the great God, who is *the searcher of hearts*, and knows *the springs* of all our actions, will, hereafter, make much greater *allowances* for those, who approach his *Oracles* with a becoming *reverence*, and desire to settle their *faith*, and model their *practice* by them, (tho' they should be mistaken in some points) than what are to be met with among Christians of this day, one towards another, notwithstanding their present state of *imperfection*.

3. My next observation concerns your religious attachment to *the manuscript*, delivered *February* the 26th, 1733-4. This seems to be a *favourite date* with you ; and, I suppose, has something, in your eyes, much *prettier* than *May* the 29th,* or *November* the 26th,† 1734. Yes, I smell your design : You are resolved to keep to *the first paper* ; and so, were I to write to you *a thousand* times afterwards, *explaining*, or *improving* what you first got into your hands, no notice would be taken of it, no re-

turns

* The date of my letter to the congregation at *Maze's pond*.

† The date of my *first* letter to the board.

turns made to it. A notable instance of your *morality*, indeed! Very pretty usage this, That a paper *hastily* put together, in half an hour's time, and designed only, as I thought, for the *private satisfaction* of a few members in the late Mr. Wallin's church, is to be made a *standard* of my faith, and the *test* of my judgment; and that in *defiance* of all the remonstrances I have made to the board, time after time, giving them a *fuller*, and, as I apprehend, a more *scriptural* state of the doctrine. Good now, let us join issue in this case, and debate the matter in a *cool*, and yet *close* way. What should be the occasion, or reason of this, Great Sirs? How are we to account for your *generous* and *Christian* management in this article? Here you observe my first concern is for you, to bring this assembly *handsomely* off.

Now has no body, think you, any interest in *common sense* but yourselves? And if there be those folks, who will neither think all *gospel*, that you say, nor every thing *equal* and *bonest*, that you *do*, will you not be suspected of *baseness* and *imposition* in this affair?

Do not run yourselves so far into a *fool's paradise*, as to imagine that no body can follow you into your *lurking holes*, draw off the *mask* with which you cover yourselves, and expose your *treachery* and *double dealing*.

There is, my dear friends, a wonderful *slight* in this piece of your conduct. You approve yourselves, indeed, men of *design*;

such as *lie in wait to deceive*, and therefore practice with a great deal of *craftiness* and *legerdemain*.—Could I have thought, were it not for such instances as these, that the members of *this board* could ever have been so hardened in iniquity, as to have allowed themselves in the *jesuitical* liberty of telling *lies* for the sake of the church!

This, Gentlemen, as much as it may surprise you at first, is *really* the case, if we look *narrowly* into matters; while you take no notice of *later* intelligence, suppress *fresher* accounts, throw by one letter after another, containing *a new* and *better* state of the argument, and tie all down to that *first paper*; which if you had either *judgment* or *honesty*, you would know ought never to be mentioned *more* as things are now circumstanced. *Heu pietas! Heu prisca fides!*

You are resolved then, that you will not take the case in *my state* of it, and by consequence, that you will not do me *the common justice* of a man! What is the meaning of all this?—I own, for my part, I can guess at no other reason for it than this, That having already possessed your own people, and therefore those with whom I have been principally concerned in the work of the ministry, that it is *an old, exploded error*, you think this *fly, underhand* way of using me, the most effectual method to confirm their *prejudices*, bind them fast in *the delusion*, and keep them from employing

employing *one thought*, or making *one inquiry* about it.

I find, indeed, by the few amongst you, that I have happened to converse with since my *expulsion*, That they have *licked up* all your *spittle* on this head, and that their continual return to those, who talk with them about it, is, O ! 'tis an *old heresy* : That *which*, in the elegant phrase of Mr. Gill, *has been buried and stunk in the grave some hundred years* ; an error *confuted over and over*.

Now could one really believe, that you speak as you think, I mean that you give us *the intire sentiments* of your hearts, *the solid produce* of your judgments, when you express yourselves in this way, one would *pity* you, indeed. The plea for this is, because we must then conclude, though you possess the highest character among *the particular baptist churches*, yet that you are, in fact, so very *blind*, as to see no difference between that doctrine which confounds God and *The Mediator*, as *Sabellianism* certainly does, and that doctrine, which preserves *the personal distinction* between them.

Well, Gentlemen, since you are thus obstinately resolved not to take it up from my *pen*, I here tell you from under *the press*, That the system, I am now an advocate for, is *no old doctrine*, in your use of the word. It can plead *antiquity*, indeed, on the score of *Revelation*, being not only as *old* as CHRIST and his apostles, but as *antient* as the constitution,

tion of *The One Mediator* by *The One God* but, taking it in *your sense*, it is so far from being *old*, even so *old* as *Praxeas*, *Noetus*, *Sabellius* or *Arius*, that it was not known by *Socinus*, who was much later than any of them. Nay, what is yet more, this system (for any thing I know to the contrary) is even more *modern* than the late *Mr. Peirce of Exeter*, or the late *Dr. Clarke of St. James's*.

Mine is not the doctrine of *One God under three different names*; mine is not the doctrine of *One supreme and two subordinate Gods*; mine is not the doctrine of *One God and two powers*: Are you so weak as to ask, What is it then? ----- I have told you once and again, That it is the doctrine of *One God and One Mediator*, the plain, express doctrine of *The Holy Bible*. *One God* or *One Divine Being* under his two comprehensive characters of *Father* and *Spirit*; the former including all titles of *Relation*, and the other all terms of *Energy*, by which he is spoken of in *Scripture*; And *One Mediator* under the characters of *The Son*, *Jesus*, *Messiah*; and the rest.

Now you, Gentlemen, who are so conversant with *the primitive fathers*; so well read in *the popish schoolmen*; so intimate with *all ecclesiastical writers*, antient and modern, point me out this doctrine from some of them. Tell me which of them has ever handled the doctrine of *One God and One Mediator*, in this plain, explicit manner; nay, which of them

them has ever touched upon the distinction in our sense of it.

No, you talk much yourselves of *God* and *The Mediator*, *God* and *Christ*, and of *God* in *Christ*; but, as I observed in my last letter, you are so intirely warpt with *the prejudices*, and so very fluent in *the jargon* of the day, that you are perpetually contradicting yourselves: And, which is still worse, are so much your own enemies, as to despise those, who would endeavour to set you right.

But to dismiss this observation: I hope, after what has been now said, you will at last be convinced, That it will be in vain for you to attempt to cover yourselves, or cheat your people any longer, with this stale outcry, That *mine is an old heresy, confuted over and over*: Since I should think, you cannot but conclude, that no body who sees this, and is in the least degree a judge for himself, will ever believe what you say to the contrary, till you have produced *chapter* and *verse* for it; or if that be not enough in your own *polite* way, given substantial and authentic proofs of what you assert. Again,

4. Whereas you have these words concerning *the manuscript*, delivered to you in *February 1733-4. which he declared to contain a confession of his faith*; I observe, That this part of *the minute* is much of a piece with the rest, that is to say, is *hardly true*, or however is very *unnatural, distorted* and *forced*.

It

It must be confessed, indeed, that when this *manuscript* was first read by Mr. Gill, and after that by myself at *the board*, I was far from denying it to be mine. Nay, by acknowledging it *a true copy* of what had been delivered to some of the brethren at *Maze's pond*, I did, in a sense, *declare* myself the author of it: But you are all my witnesses, that I never gave it any such *supercription*, nor ever called it by any such name as *a confession of my faith*. That was at first *officially* done by *the messengers* of that congregation, and has been since as faithfully *copied* by you, without any regard to what the same church received from me *The May* following (tho' you could not be *wholly* strangers to it) as likewise to the intire neglect of that *letter*, which I wrote *the board*, *The November* after; notwithstanding I then told you, in words at length, That I should be always ready to acknowledge, what was therein contained, as *an authentic confession of my faith* on the article of *Deity*.

Pray, Gentlemen, what are we to make of this conduct of yours? Is it not *smothering* things in a strange way? And therefore *egregiously trifling* with the argument, as well as *studiously imposing* on the public, and *shamefully abusing* of me?

However, letting this pass for the present: We will suppose for once, that I did *declare* as you say, at that time, in the most *usual* and *proper* sense of the word.---What is this to

the matter in hand? Does that *preclude* my making such *additions* to, or *alterations* in that *declaration*, as I may afterwards see necessary? What act of *Parliament*, or precept of the *gospel* is there for this? I may see occasion, perhaps, to alter that *a year* hence, which I now firmly believe to be true: For whatever you think of yourselves, I am far from supposing that I am got to a *perfection* of knowledge. And where is the harm of all this? You will charge me with *fickleness*, it is likely; or say, *I do not know my own mind*, which is your *Christian* way of talking with the *unthinking* people.---I tell you, Gentlemen, I had rather be counted *wavering* in my principles, if *prejudiced* persons will call it by that name, than *wicked* in my mind, *obstinate* in error, and *dishonest* to my conscience.

I think it enough, that I *declare* according to my *present apprehension* of things, or according to the *best judgment* I can form of matters at the particular time when I *declare*: But, it may be, my ideas may enlarge, my experience increase, and a *new system* of knowledge upon my mind *a twelvemonth* or *two* hence. And why should I not have the liberty to *declare* myself again in a *fuller*, and, if I can, in a *juster* manner than before?

For my part, I think it so far from being to the *discredit* of a writer to *own* any *mistake* he is convinced of in his former performances, that I shall always esteem it my glory to set so *ingenuous* a part.---And I can assure

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you,

you, it gives me no small satisfaction in the present affair, That, tho' the ministers of *this board* had not *discerning* enough to put their fingers upon any *mistake*, at the same time that they could very *charitably* exclude me as *an heretic*; I have, however, been able to see wherein that *manuscript* was *deficient* myself. And I cannot but remark here, tho' it be little more than a *repetition* of what has been said before, That if you had either had *ingenuity* or *honour*, as men; to say nothing of *temper* and *moderation*, as *Christians* and *ministers*; you could never have allowed yourselves to dwell, in such a *trifling* way, upon a thing of a *twelvemonth's* standing, after *the later* and *fuller* accounts, that have been submitted to you.

Meeting thus often, my dear friends, with the same marks of *generosity* and *Christian benevolence* from *this board*, you must excuse me, if, as these fresh occasions present, I take an opportunity of asking you some of the same questions over again, being ambitious of letting you see, with how much *gratitude* I resent every instance of *kindness* from this quarter.

After this, I presume, I may once more demand, How could you persuade yourselves that this *sleight* would pass with *the thinking* part of mankind? What, do you imagine that every body has as little *penetration* and *honesty* as yourselves? That no body can judge when a man is treated as *such*, in a *fair*, *open* and *generous* manner; and cannot observe

where

when all concerns are managed against him with *partiality*, in *darkness* and *buggermugger*; upon *false principles*, and in *false lights*?

--- Consider with yourselves, if you are yet capable of reflection, what sort of a conduct is yours. Surely you fancy, you have some very *easy*, good *humoured* folks to deal with.--- Why, I cannot say, but our *stupidity*, for the last year, might easily betray you into such an opinion; we have, indeed, been *easy* and *good humoured* so long, that we have almost *sacrificed* ourselves, and what is dearer to us than ourselves, *The truth as it is in JESUS*. But to undeceive you for the future, let me tell you, Gentlemen, that since you have at last roused me to the combat, and I find that you are denied *sense* and *Christianity* enough to manage with advantage to yourselves, you must be forced to take it with all those marks of *disingenuity*, *ignorance* and *immorality*, which hang about your *conduct* from the *beginning* to the *end*.

5. *The minute* adds, upon which we determined no more to meet him: Ay, there's the *bitter pill*; that's the *gravelling story*. You will neither *meet me*, nor must I be allowed to *meet you* for the future as members of the same *society*. Hard terms, indeed! What will give one the heartake if this does not? ---But, with your leave, Gentlemen, though you apprehend it would be too great a *stoop* for the members of this board to *meet me* in person; yet, methinks, you might have the

generosity and goodness to maul me with arguments. Surely, you might pay off my principles, and demolish my system. Why, this would be the same thing with me; for, as I have intimated before, all that I want is either to convict, or be convicted. It is quite indifferent to me which side has the better of the argument, provided I improve my self, and truth does but emerge.----But this is a mere chimera, pleasing my self with what I am never to expect: This board will be at no pains of that kind; they do not want to open my eyes, but shackle my conscience. Wherefore to the matter before us.

No more to meet him.----What is the consequence of this?----Either that you retain a very high opinion of yourselves, or think me wonderfully fond of your company; it may be both: They are conjoined? Well enough.

As to my fondness, indeed, you talk of that I understand, with a great deal of freedom in the world. You give it out, truly, That I want to be among you again.----Why surely What rare folks are the members of our board if a body may be allowed that question?----Be the case with me as it will, persons must have no discerning, who cannot see a manifest connection between this and the most consummate value for your selves. Your notions of personal merit must be very towering!

However, as a word of advice, by the way, may sometimes be of general service, suffer me to tell you, Gentlemen, That I have known

those

those, full as *selfsufficient*, as the ministers of this *board*, who, before now, have fallen a prey to their own *vanity* and *pride* : Take care it be not your own case ; that it come not to your turn.

It must be confessed, indeed, That you hold the keys of *the particular baptist* churches ; and that you *exalt* and *depose* whom you please, within that *circle*. Without your *sanction* no person, be his abilities ever so promising, has any chance of *holding* the ministerial character ; but with that, the greatest *novice* stands immediately acknowledged the most accomplished *preacher*. This may give you a *sovereignty* over the consciences of *low, mean spirited* creatures ; but, I hope, will never have any influence with me, either as to *principles* or *conduct*.

But that you should talk of this *abroad*, and give yourselves those *airs* amongst your friends ; that you should tell them, as tho' you had it from my own mouth, That *I want to be amongst you again* ! That is what sticks in my stomach. — What should I *want* to be among you for, can any body tell ? What *intrinsic* advantage am I to hope from your *friendship* ? Or, what *real* injury have I to dread from your *anger* ? Can you secure me any *reputation* with the public ? Stay till you have it yourselves. Can you promise me any *assistance* in my private studies ? Not till you have more to say for your own education. Why should I multiply words ? I must needs know,

know, how matters were with you, when I was *first among you*; and whether you have improved much *since my ejection*, I leave every one to judge, who meets with this *minute*.

However, This, I think, I may venture to say on the head: That whether I *want* to be *among you*, or not; you are certainly in great need of having somebody, better furnished than any of your *present* members, if it be only to teach you to write *English*.

And as for my self, that I may come to an open confession, I do assure you, if ever I had any desire of being *amongst* you, since I was *expelled*, it was more to *serve you*, than *myself*; having many times *pitied* those, whom I supposed *the honestest* among you, that they have been overborn by *the pertness of a two or three*, and been obliged to receive all terms from their *artful, loquacious* juniors.

Not but after all, Gentlemen, first asking pardon for the repetition, if you will but *solidly*, and *judiciously refute* my principles and *detect* me of *error*, I promise you, I will contentedly sit down under your *award*, and own that I have nothing to object against your *not meeting* me, no good pretensions for being *amongst* you. But, at present, I cannot help saying, while you neither *accept* my *person*, nor *overthrow* my *doctrine*, you use me so *barbarously*, that all, who possess the least share of *sense* or *humanity*, must be forced to acknowledge, that you act a part no way becoming your characters. Once more,

6. I ob-

6. I observe you speak of yourselves by the name of *A Society*.—How astonishing is this! For my part I wonder at your *front*; how you could have *the assurance* to use that word, to call yourselves by that term. *A Society*!—Why, Gentlemen, that looks as if you were a body of ministers in *full concert*; as if there was a *good understanding* between you; something like *friendship* and *brotherly kindness*, to unite, and bind you together. For shame! You cannot, in direct terms, assert any such thing. You know there is no body of men, upon the face of the earth, of your number, more *disconcerted* than yourselves; more *distrustful* one of another; more at *variance* in your hearts one with another, than the members of this board.

I am now only giving you *the outlines* of a picture, which shall be filled up, when you think it to your advantage; when you please to make it necessary: I can support all, that I advance, by unquestionable authorities.

You know I have good reason, for what is here said. I was not so short a time *among* you, nor observed so little while in that situation, as to be to seek in your *disposition* and *conduct* one towards another.

What is that *respect* or *complaisance*, which is to be seen amongst you? A little *colouring* only; all, as we say, *from the teeth outward*. Why do you even keep up a *weekly* meeting together? Purely because you know, that a *shew* of agreement in the face of the churches,
is

is necessary to carry on your *personal* interests. Which of you is not *jealous* of his brother, and ready to take *every advantage* over him? Nay, which of you will not *sacrifice* a brother, where you have a tolerable opportunity of raising yourselves upon his *ruins*?—In one word, the truth is, That *all of you seek your own*, and not the things which are JESUS CHRIST'S. And what is worse, that, even in these pursuits, *Ye bite and devour one another*: No wonder then, that ye are in danger of *being consumed one of another*.

Wherefore, upon the whole of this observation, my advice is, Either, That you take care to become more truly *social* among your selves, so as to cultivate *substantial peace* and *friendship* one with the other; Or, That you make it your business to choose more *suitable* expressions for the future, that you may not *impose* upon the public by representing yourselves in such *terms* as expressly *contradict* the *real* state of things within yourselves. But

7. Lastly, on this branch of the subject, I observe how *unfairly*, and I might say *unjustly*, you treat me, even in so small a thing as *the spelling* my name. Here I have *different* persons to address, as *differently* concerned in this work, as well as *the whole body* in conjunction.

I am obliged in the first place for this piece of *ingenuity* to my good friend Mr. *Samuel Wilson*; who began it, indeed, upon my *expulsion*. And therefore what I have to say to him

him will be best seen by *a letter*, which I did myself the honour of sending him, upon this occasion; and which, for your general benefit, I shall here subjoin.

To the Rev^d. Mr. SAMUEL WILSON.

Dear Sir,

“ I am of too grateful a temper to overlook favours *in common*, and therefore those, which you do me, cannot but challenge my warmest returns.

“ After having introduced myself in this manner, I should be terribly afraid, Mr. Wilson would charge me with giving him unnecessary trouble, in what I have farther to say; but that I consider him, as it will be thought, no doubt, I ought to do, a person of such exquisite accomplishments, as to know, that a breach upon *good manners* is a capital offence with the *polite world*.

“ And yet, I should have been very much disposed to have formed an excuse for all his blunders of this kind, provided I could have seen the *least* reason to believe he meant well, and was really *honest* at the bottom. But when *injustice* and *ill manners* unite in the same action, especially in one of his character, *love* to the criminal, as well as *humanity* to ourselves, provoke us to resent the affront.

“ You very well know, Mr. Wilson, that we gentlemen of *circumstance*, education
F “ and

“ and *taste*, are peculiarly nice in the *ortho-*
 “ *graphy* of our *names*; and that, where we
 “ find our *enemies* attempting any *wilful in-*
 “ *novations* upon them, we make no scruple
 “ of thinking, that we ought, in our turn, to
 “ endeavour at *proper* reprisals.

“ Now what I have to complain of You
 “ Sir, is, That you have been so very *generous*
 “ and *impartial*, as not to allow me a *natural*
 “ *right* in this case. It seems you are very
 “ fond of placing an H after the R, in my
 “ *sirname*, upon all occasions, where it is so
 “ unhappy as to fall under your pen.

“ This is using me so *barbarously*, tho’ of
 “ a sort with your *common* usage, that I can-
 “ not but think it very necessary to inquire
 “ after your *prerogative* on this score, as well
 “ as the *particular* reason, that may have in-
 “ duced you to take this liberty with me.

“ Did I ever resign my *pretensions* to Mr.
 “ *Wilson*, or appeal to him for *instructions* in
 “ this article?—No, I believe, he is so little
 “ acquainted with his *Greek Grammar* *, that
 “ he would never have suggested any thing
 “ *tolerable* in a matter of this consequence.—
 “ Did you ever know me *subscribe* myself in
 “ that way, or *spell* my name after that man-
 “ ner? Or rather, Do not you know *the re-*
 “ *verse*? Are you not a witness of *the contrary*
 “ by all *the letters* read at *the board* from un-
 “ der my own hand?

“ Tell

* I might have instanced in any other language where R involves the *aspiration*, whether *used*, or *suppressed* in writing.

“ Tell me then farther, if you please, Sir,
 “ What turn you had to serve by this *little*,
 “ *pitiful* trick.----You are aware, I suppose,
 “ that my brother has exposed himself in
 “ some measure to resentment with persons of
 “ your *depth* and *sagacity*, by inserting the
 “ *aspiration* after the P:† And you designed,
 “ like a very *affectionate* friend, to do your
 “ part in bringing me in for a share of the
 “ reputation attending this piece of *singularity*.
 “ Did you so? But, methinks, Mr. *Wilson*
 “ ought to have staid, till I had given him a
 “ fair opportunity for it myself.

“ I wonder, Sir, that one of your *great-*
 “ *ness* of mind should stoop to such *low* work;
 “ should descend to such *mean* artifices.
 “ What! had you no other way of giving
 “ yourself *relief*, and wrecking a *base*, *envi-*
 “ *ous* temper, than this? How happy may I
 “ think myself, that it is not in your power
 “ to distinguish my person, by equal marks
 “ of *generosity* and *tendernefs*! Fie upon it:
 “ Is a *wantonness* of this kind to the honour
 “ of *The Gentleman* and *Scholar*, *The Chri-*
 “ *stian* and *Divine*, as Mr. *Wilson* would wil-
 “ lingly pass himself for with the world?----
 “ Really, Sir, if I might be allowed to ad-
 “ vise you for the future, it should be to
 “ practice more *ingenuity* and *candour*, *mora-*
 “ *lity* and *faithfulness*, than you have done
 “ in the present affair, because I am strangely
 “ fearful, you will, otherwise, be in as much
 “ danger

F 2

† *The Greek R.*

“ danger of losing *all* those characters with
 “ the rest of mankind, as it is certain you are,
 “ with your

April 29,
 1735.

insulted friend and

injured humble Servant, &c.

Having thus done with *the original*, let me now come to his *copier*. But how am I surprised to find that this is no other than my *old bosom friend* and acquaintance, The Rev^d. Mr. *John Gill*! For *the minute* delivered me is in his hand. Strange, that he should so far overshoot himself! Why, where were your *wits*, my dear friend, at this time? --- *Sic notus Ulysses*? --- Well, so it is; he has really brought you into the scrape. You have meanly *transcribed* him, and, by that, made yourself a party to all *the ignorance* and *ill nature* of your *master*. I hope you will *lay it to heart*, and learn to be *more wary* for the future.

But then, as to *the board* in general: We will suppose that *one* and *another*, even your *chairman* and *secretary*, might be capable of something, that was both *weak* and *malicious*; but how came it to escape the notice of the *whole body*? --- What, is there not one *wise*, *good tempered*, *honest* person amongst you? Are you all to be led by the nose at this rate? And is there nothing, however *sacred*, that you will not sacrifice to *prejudice* and *bigotry*? --- I am grieved to see you in such circumstances:

stances: But if you partake with others in their *iniquities*, you must not think it hard, if you also share their *punishment*.

It now only remains,

Secondly, That according to our method, I close this letter with such observations as have a more *distant* connection with this *minute*; or look with a more *remote* aspect upon the argument before us. Wherefore,

1. I imagine, Gentlemen, it will be no difficult matter to form a *true* estimate of your *regards* for the interest of CHRIST by your *particular* conduct in the present affair. By this the churches must needs see how much you have the *advancement* of truth, and the *cause* of religion at heart!

You have taught the people to cry out, as those of old did, *The Temple of The Lord, The Temple of The Lord*; and so, when any thing is moved against Your High Mightinesses, O, it is the *interest* of CHRIST! How will that suffer!

But hold: It is proper we should set the people to rights in this article. I doubt, we must *distinguish* upon the head: Every thing that may be for your *personal* interests, or that you may think so, may not be the *interest* of CHRIST. For if that method of reasoning should be allowed, I cannot see, why I might not put in for the advantage of it myself; and why the people should not be as loud for my *interest*, as the *interest* of CHRIST, as they are

are for *the interest of the particular baptist board*.---But let us see, for once, (because some may think you wonderfully injured, on that score) what care you take even of your *own interests*. --- *A proposal* was made you to have *reconciled* matters; but tho' I declared for *peace*, you were for *war*. *A proposal*, that would have secured your *personal credit*; but you have consulted this so much, that you are resolved to have all your *weaknesses, ignorance, and wickednesses* exposed. So that this part of *the interest of CHRIST*, since the people will have us call it by that name, does not appear to be very much obliged to you; tho' so near, so particularly dear to yourselves.

But now, I take it, that *the interest of CHRIST* in reality, and what I would have others mean by that phrase, is *The Truth of CHRIST*: For nothing certainly can be for *the interest of CHRIST*, which does not effectually provide for *the truth as it is in JESUS*. ---And what care have you taken of this, good now?---None at all; you have not a *word* to say for it; or, if you have, you are, however, so *stupidly* indolent, that you will not *utter* a word for it, neither by *conversation* nor *writing*. Pretty *champions*, indeed!

And yet you are the folks, that one must be *tender* of; you are the Gentlemen, who must be *let alone*. ----What, to triumph in your own *ignorance*, and insult it over *the faith and consciences* of others!---Yes, to be sure; I have the highest reason to *let you alone*,
after

after you have done all that you can to fix a character of the greatest infamy upon me: And when you will neither have *the good temper*, nor *honesty* to attempt to *convince* me of *any mistake*, nor endeavour to *justify* me in the eyes of the world. *Charity*, I suppose, then, *does not begin at home*, but we are to love our neighbours *BETTER* than ourselves? No matter what becomes of our *natural rights*: *Self preservation is no longer the law of nature?* *No more the dictate of divine revelation?*—How should it, when you cannot see your own account in the controversy?

But hark ye, Gentlemen; I will bind you down here, I am resolved:—Nay do not be surprized, I am only pursuing your own great example, that is, letting you see, how long I can dwell upon the *same* topic: One or other of these *two* things I do expect, and will insist upon: I mean, either, first, *That you admit my principles as defensible and scriptural*, or else, secondly, *That you fairly and openly refute them*. Till you have done *one or other* of these, you must be contented to appear either *very weak* or *very dishonest*. But to return:

You *would be easy*. I believe it. But the world will bear you witness, that it is, after you have done all *the mischief* you can.—And *why* would you be *easy*?—For no other reasons, I am persuaded, than these: First, Because having thrown all *the dirt* at me, that was in your power, you are very desirous
all

all of it should stick; then, because you are afraid, if I rise in my own vindication, that you will turn out *otherguess* sort of folk, that you would have the public *believe* you; and lastly, because you would willingly tie mankind down in *ignorance*, and a *blind opinion* of you and your ministry.---

No, stay there; I assure you, I have more love for *myself*, for *the public*, and for *truth* than all that comes to.---And as you have broken thro' all the laws of *humanity*, and all the rules of *the gospel*, to load me with *contempt*, and injure *the cause* of religion; you must not, you cannot, sure, take it amiss, I endeavour by every *allowable* method to set things in their true light; that is, *recover* myself, and *rescue* my principles from your *weak* and *malicious* misrepresentations.

However, take it as you will (for this is not a time of day to consult your *humours*) you shall find that some of us are resolved to stand by *the interest*, *the interest* of CHRIST, truly so called: And that, if we cannot propagate *the truth*, and at the same time preserve your *credit*, we will relinquish all consideration of the latter. Nay verily, for my own part, I must be so free as to own, that I *begin* to think, it is *hardly possible* to serve *the truth* however amongst *the particular baptists*, unless your *credit* be destroyed *first*. I *begin* to think this doing God *good service*. My reason for this is, That it appears to me from all the *methods* of your conduct, that you look upon

these two as *incomparable*; that, your *personal* interests; and the *interest of CHRIST, b. e. his truths*, will not stand together.

And who shall blame us, for this neglect of you and your *interest*?—No thinking, considerate person. How can we expect others to *consult* for us, when it is notorious, that we take no care to *provide* for ourselves?—Tell me, Gentlemen, what man alive could have taken a more *Christian*, a more *condescending* way, than I did in my last *application*? How was it in any one's power to have made you a more *fair*, a more *equitable* proposal, than was made you in my preceding *letter*?—No, Gentlemen, I am obliged to tell you, that you are not to expect to lie covered in your *dens* and *darkness* for ever; it is high time you were dragged out, and turned to the sun to sweeten a little.

And is this doing the *interest of CHRIST* any injury? Far from it. We are taught otherwise by a reverend member of this board; one of your own *champions* for *orthodoxy*. And tho' his *phraseology*, in common, be less *elegant*, than one could wish; yet since it may do more *execution* with some of his admirers, than the strongest reasoning, and the most shining periods, I shall be at the pains of transcribing him. The passage I refer to is this: For whatsoever the *charitable* men of our age may suggest to the contrary, controversies are as useful to the churches, in the present state of things, as winds are to purify the air, and

*purge the waters, and, by that means, prevent pestilential distempers.**—I am intirely of my friend's mind.

And I add, tho' it was hinted, indeed, above, that when the case comes to be such, that we cannot preserve *truth and peace, the character* of ministers and *the interest* of CHRIST together, those, who desire to answer a good conscience, and approve themselves to God, must drop the consideration of *peace*, and attend the cause of *truth*.—Nor can there be any reason, that I know of, why the ministers of *the board*, if they are *negligent* in their office, and pursue *iniquitous* measures, should not be *exposed*. In cases of this nature, I cannot see, that *names and characters*, however *sacred* in themselves, when they appear to be *wrongly* applied, and are *abused* to the worst purposes, should screen any from *public censure*, no, not even those, who call themselves *ministers of the gospel*, and *churches of CHRIST*.

Finally, Gentlemen, all that I have yet said to the contrary notwithstanding, those under your influence, as well as yourselves, will farther reproach me, and say, That I *tear the interest to pieces*.—I ask their pardon; it is not I, but yourselves.—I love the *particular baptist interest*: And because I love it, would have been glad to have *saved* you: to have covered your *weaknesses*, and have buried your *iniquities* in silence. And of this

* Mr. Gill's Postscript, as before.

this I think my *continued silence* till now, and my *repeated applications* to you, sufficient proofs. For what other reason have I kept matters so long from the public? Wherefore else did I send to you by *one* letter after another? But for this, why did I solicit an *accommodation*, and make *the terms* of it so easy? Wherefore did I ask no more than a *bare liberty of conscience* in *one article*? A bare right to *private judgment* in *one circumstantial*?—No, you must certainly take the reproach home to yourselves:—And, indeed, considering how *unnaturally* you act not only by me, but *all* who are *sufferers* with me; how much you *despise* or *abuse* every opportunity that presents to your advantage; and that you either cannot see the things which make for your own peace, as well as *the benefit* of those concerned with you, or however, *will not improve* them, notwithstanding they are *actually* put into your hands; I must be so free as to declare, tho' I tremble to think of it, and scarce know how to meet the expressions, That it looks to me, as if you were *left of God*, *judicially blinded* and *hardened*, to pull destruction on your own heads, and ruin that interest, you are so wonderfully zealous for in *profession*, but so *barbarously* and *shamefully* neglect in *practice*.

My greatest concern, I call God to witness, That thro' your *evil counsels*, and *unequal measures*, it is not in my power to serve the *baptist* interest.—Why do I say *the baptist*?

What need I confine myself there? I may but too justly say, *the interest of CHRIST in general.*—With respect to *the particular baptists*, it is most certain, what with the sway you have over *the consciences* of particular persons, and the *jurisdiction* you exercise over *the congregations* in common, the people have resigned *all property*; and neither dare to *believe*, nor *act*, but under your *direction* and *licence*.*

Were not this the case, I do not know, what any of them have to *fear* by giving me countenance, tho' it were in opposition to *the judgment* and *authority* of this reverend *synod*.

Certain I am, if they have not resolution enough to give it me without your *concurrence*, it will be in vain for them to *wait* for it. For you know me, and have always found me, so *bitter an enemy* to your *cabals*, and *underband* managements, that you will never think it for *your interest* to have me *amongst* you.

Now I have told you *the whole truth* at once; I heartily wish, you may know how to make *good use* of it.

For my part, I am determined, as God shall enable me, to abide by *the dictates* of my conscience; tho' I should be sure, for so doing, to draw the resentment of the whole world upon me. And as you have had *mercy* upon *the truth*; for *my system* is *truth*, it must be so to me, till you have *refuted* it; do not expect, that those who value *the truth*, should

* I may, probably, have occasion to insist more largely on this argument, in a *discourse*, calculated to detect *The Popery* subsisting among *The Particular Baptists*.

should have *mercy* on you, to the *stifling* their consciences, and the *betraying* their God.

I had an observation or two more for you, such as,

2. That it will certainly be proper you should study to acquaint yourselves better both with *words* and *things*, Because if you should go on to display your *abilities*, for time to come, as you have done in this *minute*, you will not only be *above* being read, but, in short, become *unanswerable*; I mean, that, no body will think it worth their while either to *answer*, or *read* you. And then,

3. That upon this view of your *principles* and *conduct*, it will likewise be very necessary for the *people*, your *communicants* especially, to take care both how they *follow* you *too closely*, and yet also, how they *depart* too much from you. Because in the former case, they will be sure to *believe* things, they do not *understand*, and so *possibly* may fall into grievous errors: And because in the latter case, they can never avoid incurring your *displeasure*, and so expose themselves, in the end, to *censure*, and *excommunication*.

But as I imagine, you must be pretty well satisfied with what you have already had, for one time; I shall decline the *inlargement*; under these two last heads, and conclude with this general address,

And now, Gentlemen, having done with the *particulars* of what I had to observe upon your *minute*, let me beg, That you would
seriously

seriously, and, if that can be, without *partiality*, review what you were pleased to order as *an answer* to my last letter. This I the rather put you upon, because I cannot help thinking, that it highly concerns you to reflect, whether *this same minute* of yours be, upon the whole of it, an answer *worthy* this board. That is to say, Whether there be room for you to conclude, that you have discovered such a *compass* of reading, such a *fruitfulness* of thought, such a *force* of expression, and lastly, such a *closeness* of reasoning, as the world, for whom you *designed* it, might justly expect from persons of your *character*.---Be so just to yourselves as to *draw it over again*, and examine, whether you are not at last obliged to determine *against yourselves* in this matter. Can you think it contains all that *ingenuity* and *learning*, that *candor* and *honesty*, which becomes *Gentlemen, Scholars, and Ministers of the Gospel*? Alas! for you, my friends.---Think only how *little*, and *mean*, and *odious*, you must appear in the eyes of *the judicious, discerning* part of mankind! What an idea must they form of *our board*, those who are at the head of the *Calvinistical baptist* interest, and manage their affairs thro' the whole kingdom, while they have this specimen of your *penetration* and *Christianity* before them?---Really, Gentlemen, as I have in part told you before, I am not only *ashamed* of you, but I *pity* you; I am *concerned* for you; not so much that I expose you, because I have nothing
else

else left me ; but that you have been so far
obstinate and cruel to yourselves, as to *oblige* me
 to it.—However, I cannot but suppose, you
 will *readily* allow me *the same liberty*, you take
 to, yourselves. If you can do no otherwise
 than *oppose and persecute* me, from a *principle*
of conscience, you cannot surely be angry, that
 I take this method to vindicate myself, and
 the *interest* I am concerned with, tho' your
pride and reputation with the public should
 happen to pay for it.

I am,

Revd. Gentlemen,

O. S. A. S. A.

Your sincere friend

and most humble servant,

MAY 1,
 1735.

SAYER RUDD.

ERRATA.

- Page 20 l. 10, for *produced* read *produce*.
 27 — 32, for *slight* r. *sleight*.
 33 — 25, before *upon* insert *open*.
 48 — 3, for *otberguesi* r. *otberguise*.

the left me; but that you have been to
and tried to convince, as to obliging
to it. However, I cannot but suppose, you
will readily allow me the liberty, you take

~~you have been to~~
~~and tried to convince~~
~~as to obliging~~
~~to it. However, I cannot but suppose~~
~~you will readily allow me the liberty~~
~~you take~~
I am concerned with the
interest, I am concerned with the
take this method to vindicate myself, and
conscience, you cannot but be angry, that
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ERRATA

Page 20 l. 10. for 'freedom' read 'freedom'
27 — 32. for 'light' read 'light'
33 — 22. before 'upon' insert 'of'
48 — 3. for 'the' read 'the'

